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WHERE DID THE DOCUMENT COME FROM?

Priests who visited East Timor recently have written a report which we publish below. The document is a testimony to the truth of Fretilin claims to control over 80 per cent of the territory, their majority support in the population, and repeated reports of Indonesian atrocities.

The document, sent to Foreign Minister Peacock two weeks ago by the church organisation which received it, was leaked in the Melbourne Age on November 20.

Peacock has not yet commented on it.

We present it as a valuable document, the first such account from anti-Fretilin sources. We trust our readers will be able to dismiss the anti-Fretilin comments it contains.

The visiting priests spoke to Portuguese priests who had remained in the country since the Indonesian invasion on December 7, 1975.

The Bishop of Dili, and most Portuguese priests there had, throughout the period following the overthrow of fascism in Portugal in April 1974, been active opponents of Fretilin, The Bishop worked closely with APODETI, the pro-Indonesian party, and the Indonesians. The "communist" label the priests place on Fretilin is typical of their reactionary and short-sighted views.

The fact that the author(s) were visitors is attested by the incorrect spelling of Eili and of Ermera (Amaru). We have kept these errors in the text to be able to reproduce it exactly. The document, which came from Europe, is in English. All spelling errors are reproduced as in the original.

Priests confirm East Timorese decimated

•Visiting priests claim up to 100,000 Timorese, including women and children, have been killed by the Indonesian invaders.

1. THE PRIEST

There are 31 priests in East Timor

15 Native priests
16 priests of foreign nationalities

Note: 2 Portuguese, 1 Italian and 3 native priest are known to be held by the Fretelin in the mountain. Nobody knows about their well being.

Wether priests of foreign nationalities will stay and work in East-Timor is an open question but it is believed that some priests will leave for Portugal.

2. THE PEOPLE

One third of the population had been baptized Catholic. The rest however, claimed themselves to be Catholic. At the moment many ask to be baptized because they heard in the other parts of Indonesia, everybody must have a religion.

3. DILLI

The total town people of Dilli is 30,000. 20,000 of them have now registered themselves for passage to Portugal. Others are with the Fretelin in the mountains so that in fact the real town people of Dilli numbers only a couple of thousands not counting the Indonesian soldiers.

4. POLITICAL SITUATION

-All villages and towns in East Timor are occupied by the Indonesian military forces. Beyond the villages and towns there is no main land. And the safety is not guaranted because of the Fretilin raids.

-The total population of villages and towns occupied by the Indonesian forces amounts to 150,000 people. Taking the total population of East Timor of 650,000 people into consideration it means that 500,000 people is not under their control.

-Land communication has been disrupted. The only means of transportation is helicopter or sea route.

-About the territory: 80% of the territory is not under direct control of the Indonesian military forces.

5. DEAD TOLL

According to report, 60,000 people had been killed during the war. We found this figure rather high, because it means 10% of the total population of East Timor. But when I asked two Fathers in Dilli they replied that according to their estimate the figure of people killed may reach to 100,000.

6. POLITICAL PARTIES

As Dilli sees it:

+ 25% are members of Fretelin. (But the top leaders who are the real Communist are only 20 - 30 in numbers. They all came from the Lisbon University in Portugal).

+ 40.50% are U.D.T. (Democratic Party)

+ 20.25% are Apodeti.

When the Fretelin came into force the UDT and Apodeti joined together for integration with Indonesia. The Fretelin was at that time an independent party although most of their leaders are Communists. Later it became real Communist.

7. INTEGRATION

-The desire to integrate with Indonesia is beginning to cool off because of bad experience with the occupying forces. (stealing, robbery, burning houses, violating girls etc.).

-An example :
5000 people welcome the Indonesian troops in Amaru (Demonstration for integration). Now there are only 1000 people in Amaru, others joined the Fretelin in the mountains.

-If this is an exceptional case, then it will be not so bad, but if this is a symptom of the real situation, than it is very bad.

8. REHABILITATION

-At present it is very difficult to start rehabilitation program because the people we intended to help are still in the mountains.

-A teacher school might be an important subject but there are no pupils or only a very few.

-The other possibility that looks promising is the language course. Father da Costa plans to open the language course in September or December. But the house that Father da Costa has kept ready for the course was taken by the military.

9. THE GOVERNMENT

-The East Timor government is without any authority. It is only a puppet government for the military commander.

-The new Governor promised to build a big new mosque for the few Moslem in Dilli. Before the war their number was about 300. Now there are a lot of Moslem soldiers.

10. THE FRETELIN

It appeared that the Fretelin has changed its tactic to win the people. They treated the people well now and do not offend them in their believe. They tried to keep their discipline high. The Fretelin soldiers are cultivating land now and make gardens.

Some comments heard in passing:

-"In the Fretelin there are Communists, but among the Indonesian troops there are more Communists" -

-"There are good people in the Indonesian troops, but many of them are bad soldiers" -

-"If there should be held a real referendum people will choose Fretelin" -

11. WEAPON

-It is rumoured that Indonesia will start using napalm, because they can not win the war otherwise.

-Last week Indonesia ordered Stalin organ to back their purpose.

12. THE FRETELIN STRATEGY

They evade frontal attack or engagement with the Indonesian troops, or raid village where there are Indonesian troops. They employ guerilla war pattern. When they are out on raid for food and material they often sent mothers with children first, followed by older people then young villagers and at the rear the Fretelin, as much as six or ten. The Fretelin keep watch while the villagers steal and rob.

The Fretelin has access to the sea on the south coast, facing Australia. It is rumoured that they got supply (men and material) from Australia.

13. DOMESTIC REFUGEES

The domestic refugees are farmers from the border region in Timor Indonesia. They fled their home because of the frequent Fretelin raids. They lost their houses and gardens and live in a very poor shelters. The helpthe Indonesia given to them is poorly managed.

14. ACTION FOR HELP

-The Indonesian government helps with thousand tons of rice.

-The East Timor refugees received dish money. Rp.100. - per person per day. But the help for the domestic refugees is far from satisfying with many leakages.

As far as we could we try to help the people by conducting a rehabilitation program. We have the following program on our schedule.

-Repairing 13 furguson tractors, to be used in the Maliana plain, for food production. We have already contacted Misereor for help.

-Purchasing 200 ton corn seeds for next year planting time. We have already made contact with German Veritas Vereni for this program.

-Repairing printing machine in Dilli. Our contact for this matter is LPPS and CRS Jakarta.

-To solve land transportation problem we need two trucks. Request for help has been sent to Misereor.

-We like to have representatives in the rehabilitation area. Request for help was sent to CRS.

In the meantime our help for the refugees both the East Timor and the domestic refugees still continues.